



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## *Office of Campaign & Political Finance*

*One Ashburton Place, Boston 02108*

*727-8352*

*Dennis J. Duffin*  
*Director*

December 18, 1984

AO-1984-18

Mr. J. David Keaney  
1550 Main Street  
Springfield, MA

Dear Mr. Keaney:

You have recently requested an advisory opinion concerning the application of M.G.L. c. 55, the campaign finance law to contributions to individual ward, city and town committees from U.S. Representative Edward Boland's Congressional campaign committee, organized under federal law.

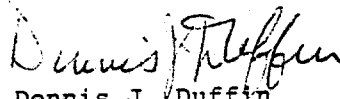
A ward, city or town committee in Massachusetts is a political committee, organized to influence the nomination or election of candidates to public office. As such, it is organized under and subject to all provisions of G.L. c. 55, Section 7 of that Chapter states in relevant part, "No person or combination of persons... shall in connection with any nomination or election receive money or its equivalent, expend or disburse or promise to expend or disburse the same, except as authorized by this chapter. A political committee or a person acting under the authority or on behalf of such a committee may receive money or its equivalent, or expend or disburse or promise to expend or disburse the same for the purpose of aiding or promoting the success or defeat of a candidate at a primary or election...and for other purposes expressly authorized by this chapter subject, however, to the provisions thereof."

It has been the long-standing and consistent interpretation of this office, established through an interpretive bulletin (See OCPF-IB-82-101) and numerous advisory opinions on this subject, that a thorough and consistent reading of chapter 55 compels the conclusion that a political committee subject to this Chapter may accept contributions only from those political committees which are also organized under, and subject to, the campaign finance law.

This interpretation, and its application to your particular question, is further supported by other legal authority. In the 1978 Supreme Judicial Court case of Anderson v. City of Boston 380 N.E. 20 628 (1978), the court state that, "We interpret G.L. c. 55 as intended to reach all political fund raising and expenditures within the Commonwealth." In this case, the Supreme Judicial Court reasoned that if there was no specific language in Chapter 55 authorizing a particular campaign finance activity, the activity was not contemplated by the legislature, and therefore not authorized. Since there is no language permitting Massachusetts candidates or political committees to receive contributions from federally organized committees in Chapter 55, this activity was not contemplated, and is not permitted. In addition, M.G.L. c. 55, sections 7 and 8 specifically prohibits political committees on behalf of candidates from receiving contributions, either directly or indirectly, from corporations and certain other entities. Because, a federally organized committee can receive certain such contributions, a contribution to a Massachusetts ward, city or town committee from your congressional committee would result in an indirect contribution to a Massachusetts committee from sources prohibited under Chapter 55.

Based on the foregoing, it is my opinion that ward, city and town committees in Massachusetts may not accept contributions from the congressional campaign committee of U.S. Representative Edward Boland.

Very truly yours,

  
Dennis J. Duffin  
Director

DJD/mam